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Annual Outing Meeting of the Southern Division, 1903

BY FRANK S. DAGGETT

THE 1903 outing meeting of the Southern Division of the Cooper Ornithological Club which was held October 31, November 1 and 2, will long be remembered as one of the most successful ever held by the club. This annual gathering of the clan has taken place for many years past and has become so popular there is little danger of its being overlooked in the future.

Once a year the members select a committee who in turn select a place for the gathering of the clan, and much depends upon their judgment.

Twice in the history of the club it has met on Mt. Wilson, a pine-covered ridge 5800 feet high, where kinglets, chickadees, nuthatches, white-headed woodpeckers, Sierra juncos and black-throated warblers abound. Other years found the members with blankets, camped under the oaks in the upper reaches of the Arroyo Seco canyon, where jays, dotted canyon wrens and pallid wren-tits enliven the scene by day, and spotted and California screech owls by night, although, as I remember it, the members did most of the whooping.

This year the committee, Howard Robertson and H. J. Lelande, made a happy hit when they selected the Salisbury ranch for a rendezvous. This ranch adjoins the sign-board station of Garnsey, on the Chatsworth branch of the Southern Pacific R. R. From its edge grain fields stretch as far as the eye can see. Ordinarily an orchard district, intruding itself into grain fields, offers to the collector and observer little beyond the common run of birds, but here the whole fauna is changed by the topography of the country. The vast water shed to the north and east, culminating in the Tejuanga Wash which crosses the San Fernando valley in a series of strips of great width, carrying the underground flow of water, focusing at this point, forms the head of the Los Angeles river, with its low bottom-land and dense willows and clumps of cotton-wood, with the avifauna attracted by such an environment. From this point, north, for miles the wash gradually widens until it becomes a broad chaparral region, the resort of valley partridges black-tailed gnatcatchers, cactus wrens and thrashers. It is here that stragglers like the sage thrasher and lark bunting have been taken, in years gone by, by Swarth and others. The weed-grown grain stubble affords shelter for western savanna sparrows, western meadowlarks, western vesper sparrows, Say phoebes and burrowing owls. The orchards, with more or less fallen fruit on the ground, attract a great many red-shafted flickers, house finches, and Audubon warblers.

These outings are a crucial test of the members; while many plan for them months in advance, it is the only tried collector and enthusiast who usually responds at roll call, but it is worthy of record that every officer of the Southern Division responded to the call of his name at the meeting held October 21, 1903.

Messrs. Robertson, Lelande, Swarth, Pringle and Shinn came from Los Angeles by team, through Cahuenga Pass, Judson by rail, and Richardson with blankets strapped to handle bar covered the eighteen miles from Pasadena on wheel, and Grinnell and Daggett by rig.

During the three days in the field the territory was carefully investigated by the different members of the party who scattered in all directions at daybreak, returning in time to relate the experiences of the day over a delicious stew made from game contributed by the hunters of the party. W. B. Judson, always lucky, made the most noteworthy find, it being an adult male of Scott oriole (*Icterus parisorum*) the first specimen actually taken in Los Angeles Co., although H. S. Swarth noted a single bird many years ago. Among the other varieties was a pigeon hawk and Brewer sparrow by Daggett, and two dusky poor wills, one by Judson and one by Swarth.

Grinnell and Swarth set a line of traps for mammals and secured many odd forms, such as kangaroo rats, pocket and white-footed mice and wood rats, the wily coyote refusing to be caught but did not fail to help himself to mammals already in the traps.

In order to give an idea of the class of birds seen on an outing of this sort, I append a list of those noted by the different members, with notes.

1. VALLEY PARTRIDGE, *Lophortyx californicus vallicolus*. Plentiful in the brushy washes. The largest flock numbered about fifty.

2. MOURNING DOVE, *Zenaidura macroura*. In the middle of the day flocks of 30 to 40 hung about the cottonwoods.

3. TURKEY VULTURE, *Cathartes aura*. Half a dozen circled about on the 2nd.

4. MARSH HAWK, *Circus hudsonius*. One noted by Swarth over grain stubble.

5. WESTERN SHARP-SHINNED HAWK, *Accipiter velox rufilatus*. Several seen about head of Los Angeles river.

6. WESTERN RED-TAILED HAWK, *Buteo borealis calurus*. One seen in Eagle Rock valley. Pestered by large flock of house finches.

7. PIGEON HAWK, *Falco columbarius*. Flying between cottonwoods, where large flocks of mourning doves had gathered.

8. DESERT SPARROW HAWK, *Falco sparverius phalena*. Several seen on telegraph poles.

9. AMERICAN LONG-EARED OWL, *Asio wilsonianus*. Flock of a dozen started from low juniper clump in Tejuanga Wash by C. Richardson who secured two.

10. SHORT-EARED OWL, *Asio accipitrinus*. One started up from neglected grain field at edge of wash.

11. BURROWING OWL, *Speotyto cunicularia hypogaea*. In neglected grain field.

12. ROAD-RUNNER, *Geococcyx californianus*. Often started in grain field, edge of wash.
13. RED-BREASTED SAPSUCKER, *Sphyrapicus ruber*. Two noted on pepper tree near Burbank.
14. AMERICAN BARN OWL, *Strix pratensis*. Flew out of dense top of live oak.
15. RED-SHAFTED FLICKER, *Colaptes cafer collaris*. Very common in San Fernando valley, about orchards where fruit has fallen, also on ground in sycamore groves.
16. DUSKY POOR-WILL, *Phalacroptilus nuttalli californicus*. Swarth and Judson each took specimens; started from ground in wash.
17. ANNA HUMMINGBIRD, *Calypte anna*. Common about wild tobacco, now in bloom.
18. CASSIN KINGBIRD, *Tyrannus vociferans*. One seen on telegraph wire near West Glendale.
19. SAY PHOEBE, *Sayornis saya*. In wash among scattered brush; also in neglected grain field.
20. BLACK PHOEBE, *Sayornis nigricans semiatra*. Several noted on fences by roadside and on tree at edge of orchard.
21. CALIFORNIA HORNED-LARK, *Otocoris alpestris actia*.
22. CALIFORNIA JAY, *Aphelocoma californica*. About scattered oaks in washes.
23. AMERICAN RAVEN, *Corvus corax sinuatus*. There is a large "crow-roost" in the willows at the head of the Los Angeles river, and quite a number of ravens come in at dusk in pairs and small flocks of 4 or 5. Their larger size and croak readily distinguishes them from the crows. Judson shot one from a flock of three.
24. CALIFORNIA CROW, *Corvus americanus hesperis*. They arrive at the roost, noted above, at dusk, some going direct, while the larger flocks come in high up, dropping down in irregular curves when nearly over the trees.
25. WESTERN MEADOWLARK, *Sturnella magna neglecta*. Flocks in grain fields.
26. SCOTT ORIOLE, *Icterus parisorum*. The one taken was probably a straggler from the Great Basin and Mohave Desert region.
27. BREWER BLACKBIRD, *Scolecophagus cyanocephalus*. In large flocks about cultivated tracts, corrals, and lawns.
28. HOUSE FINCH, *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis*. Gathering in large flocks outside of cultivated districts.
29. WILLOW GOLDFINCH, *Astragalinus tristis salicamans*. Several seen by roadside.
30. ARKANSAS GOLDFINCH, *Astragalinus psaltria*. On telegraph wires with flocks of house finches.
31. WESTERN VESPER SPARROW, *Poocetes gramineus confinis*. Common on weed-grown grain fields.
32. WESTERN SAVANNA SPARROW, *Passerculus sandwichensis alaudinus*. In small flocks in grain fields.
33. WESTERN LARK SPARROW, *Chondestes grammacus strigatus*. Flocks by roadside especially near dry uncultivated stretches bordering ranches.
34. INTERMEDIATE SPARROW, *Zonotrichia leucophrys gambeli*. Flocks everywhere in washes and cultivated ground wherever suitable shelter.
35. BREWER SPARROW, *Spizella breweri*. Only met with occasionally in chaparral-covered sections.
36. SIERRA JUNCO, *Junco hyemalis thurberi*. Small flock about cypress row near Tuluca.
37. BELL SPARROW, *Amphispiza belli*. In dry brush-covered areas in washes.
38. SAGE SPARROW, *Amphispiza belli nevadensis*. A straggler from Great Basin district.
39. SAN DIEGO SONG SPARROW, *Melospiza cinerea cooperi*. In willows, head of Los Angeles river.
40. SPURRED TOWHEE, *Pipilo maculatus megalonyx*. Common in brushy wash.
41. ANTHONY TOWHEE, *Pipilo fuscus senicula*. Common everywhere where there is sheltering hedge or brush.
42. CALIFORNIA SHRIKE, *Lanius ludovicianus gambeli*. Pretty generally scattered; in washes, on telegraph wires, and about orchards.
43. AUDUBON WARBLER, *Dendroica auduboni*. One of our common winter visitants. Almost impossible to get out of sight of one.
44. WESTERN MOCKINGBIRD, *Mimus polyglottos leucopterus*. Not in song at this date but otherwise evident.
45. PASADENA THRASHER, *Toxostoma redivivum pasadense*. Common but shy.
46. CACTUS WREN, *Heleodytes brunneicapillus*. In cactus grown places. On November 1 found two nests almost completed, birds carrying lining material.
47. ROCK WREN, *Salpinctes obsoletus*. Several seen along cut bank of wash.
48. AMERICAN PIPIT, *Anthus pensilvanicus*. A dozen seen in barley stubble west of Burbank.
49. SAN DIEGO WREN, *Thryomanes bewicki charienturus*. Common in brushy parts of wash.
50. TULE WREN, *Telmatorhynchus palustris paludicola*. Only one seen, in cactus grown area, a mile from water.
51. PALLID WREN-TIT, *Chamaea fasciata henshawi*. Thick brushy clumps.
52. CALIFORNIA BUSH-TIT, *Psaltiriparus minimus californicus*. In flocks about oaks.
53. RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET, *Regulus calendula*. Saw two in roadside peppers.
54. WESTERN GNATCATCHER, *Poliophtila cerulea obscura*. Large brushy clumps in wash.
55. BLACK-TAILED GNATCATCHER, *Poliophtila californica*. Common in brush of wash.
56. DWARF HERMIT THRUSH, *Hylocichla guttata nana*. One noted in brush at head of Eagle Rock Valley and another in willows of Los Angeles river.
57. WESTERN ROBIN, *Merula migratoria propinqua*. Only one seen, flying southeast across Eagle Rock valley.